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5. An element as claimed in claim 1, which comprises from 30-90 wt% of thermoplastic polymer and 25-50 wt% of an elastic modulus increasing material.

6. An element as claimed in claim 1, wherein the thermoplastic polymer is polyethylene, polypropylene or polyethylene terephthalate.

7. An element as claimed in claim 6, wherein the thermoplastic polymer is bi-axially oriented polypropylene.

B² Sb CC 1/8. (Amended) An element as claimed in claim 1, wherein the thermoplastic plastics material is a recycled material.

9. An element as claimed in claim 1 which contains glass fibres as an elastic modulus increasing material.

10. An element as claimed in claim 9, wherein the glass fibres have a length of at least 5 mm.

11. An element as claimed in claim 10, wherein the glass fibres have a length of 8-12 mm.

12. An element as claimed in claim 9 wherein the glass fibres are oriented in planes parallel to a load bearing surface thereof.

B³ Sb CC 1/13. (Amended) An element as claimed in claim 1, which has compounded with the thermoplastic plastics material at least one substance selected from fire retardants, UV stabilisers and/or friction increasers.

14. An element as claimed in claim 1 which has at least one substance selected from fire retardants, UV stabilisers and/or friction increasers present in an outer layer which has a thickness of up to 1 mm.

B4 Sb CC 3/ 15. (Amended) An element as claimed in claim 14, wherein the outer layer is formed from thermoplastics plastic material containing the at least one substance and co-extruded with the remainder of the material forming said element.

D2 ant 16. An element as claimed in claim 1, which has a co-extruded outer layer which has anti-slip character.

17. An element as claimed in claim 1 wherein the compounded thermoplastic plastics material contains a coupling agent and/or a nucleating agent in amounts of from 1 to 3 wt% and 0.1 to 2 wt% respectively.

B5 Sb CC 3/ 18. (Amended) A method of providing access by foot to a main location to which access is required, which comprises providing access by foot to a first location and locating between the first location and the main location, so as to have an unsupported span existing between support positions, a platform structure which resists static and/or dynamic loading, characterized in that the platform structure is formed as a thermoplastic plastics extrudate which is compounded so that the structure has a flexural modulus of at least 4000 Mpa.

19. A method as claimed in claim 18, wherein the compounded plastics extrudate has a flexural modulus of 5500 Mpa or above.

20. A method as claimed in claim 18, wherein the ratio of flexural modulus in Megapascals to density in kg/m^3 of plastics material of the compounded plastics material is at least 2.5:1.

21. A method as claimed in claim 20, wherein said ratio is at least 4.2:1.

B6 Sb CC 3/ 22. (Amended) A method as claimed in claim 18, wherein the compounded plastics extrudate comprises from 30-90 wt% of thermoplastic polymer and 25-50 wt% of an elastic modulus increasing material.

23. A method as claimed in claim 18, wherein the thermoplastic polymer is polyethylene,

polypropylene or polyethylene terephthalate.

24. A method as claimed in claim 23, wherein the thermoplastic polymer is bi-axially oriented polypropylene.

25. A method as claimed in claim 18, wherein the thermoplastic plastics material is a recycled material.

26. A method as claimed in claim 18, wherein the compounded plastics extrudate contains glass fibres as an elastic modulus increasing material.

27. A method as claimed in claim 26, wherein the glass fibres have a length of at least 5mm.

28. A method as claimed in claim 27, wherein the glass fibres have a length of 8-12 mm.

29. A method as claimed in claim 26, wherein the glass fibres are oriented in planes parallel to a load bearing surface of the compounded plastics extrudate.

30. A method as claimed in claim 18, wherein the plastics extrudate has at least one substance selected from fire retardants, UV stabilisers and/or friction increasers compounded therein.

31. A method as claimed in claim 18, wherein the compounded plastics extrudate has at least one substance selected from fire retardants, UV stabilisers and/or friction increasers present in an outer layer of the structure which has a thickness of up to 1 mm.

32. A method as claimed in claim 31, wherein the outer layer is formed from thermoplastic plastics material containing the at least one substance and co-extruded with the remainder of the material forming said structure.

33. A method as claimed in claim 18, wherein the structure has a co-extruded outer layer

which has anti-slip character.

34. A method as claimed in claim 18 wherein the compounded plastics extrudate contains a coupling agent and/or a nucleating agent in amounts of from 1 to 3 wt% and 0.1 to 2 wt% respectively.--

REMARKS

This is a response to the office action dated February 27, 2002. Originally, there were claims 1-43 filed in the case. Claims 35-43 are subject to restriction requirement, and claims 1-34 remain in prosecution, all which have been rejected. This response is being submitted in order to place the case in condition for allowance.

For convenience in prosecution, all claims are repeated herein, even those which are not amended herein. Two sets of claims are included, one set showing the changes made in this response (attached) and one clean set (set out above). No new matter has been added to the application.

In this response, claims 1, 8, 13 and 18 have been amended in order to place the case in condition for allowance. Claim 1 was amended to correct a typographical error value. The correct value appears in claim 18 as filed, and in the specification, e.g., on page 2, line 17. Claims 8 and 13 were amended to correct the spelling of "thermoplastic." Claim 18 was amended to provide proper antecedent basis and to clarify the claim language.

Claims 1 - 34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,344,268 to Stucky et al (**Stucky**). Applicant acknowledges the rejection of the claims and respectfully traverses.

Stucky is specifically concerned with foamed polymer-fibre composites which are used as building materials, but are not to be load bearing in the sense of the present application. IN the present invention, the structural elements must have a flexural modulus considerably higher than previously contemplated if they are to allow withstand static and dynamic loading. As the specification indicates, the present invention is based upon the establishing of an acceptable minimum flexural modulus value, there being thermoplastic plastics materials suitable for this purpose, and more particularly, equipment having been developed which enables such plastic material to be manufactured in the form of load bearing structural elements. In practice, these will not be blown reinforced materials but unblown reinforced materials, although it is not considered necessary to specify in the claims that the present application is concerned with unblown